

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A flexible fabric comprising a woven fabric substrate and a plurality of guard plate assemblies affixed to a top surface of the fabric substrate in a fixed spaced relationship to each other to maintain a selected gap size, each guard plate assembly including a first layer of material affixed to the top surface of the fabric substrate, the first layer of each guard plate assembly collectively providing a first plurality of non-overlapping, polygonal guard plates ~~permeating~~ penetrating at least the top surface of the fabric substrate to affix the guard plates to the fabric substrate, and a second layer of material joined to the first layer of material on a surface opposite the fabric substrate, wherein the second layer of material collectively provides a second plurality of non-overlapping guard plates registered relative to the first plurality of plates.

2. (currently amended) The fabric of claim 1, wherein each of the second plurality of plates ~~layer of material of each guard plate assembly~~ completely covers the surface of the corresponding first plurality of plates ~~layer of material~~.

3. (currently amended) The fabric of claim 1, wherein ~~the second layer of material of~~ at least some of the second plurality of guard plates ~~guard plate assemblies do~~ does not completely cover the surface of the corresponding guard plates of the first plurality of guard plates ~~layer of material~~.

4. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 1 wherein some of the gaps between the guard plate assemblies include material corresponding to the second layer of material.

5. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 4 wherein some of the gaps are filled with material corresponding to the second layer of material.

6. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 1 and further comprising a second plurality of guard plate assemblies affixed to the fabric substrate, each guard plate assembly of the second plurality having an upper surface formed from a material different than the material of the second layer.

7. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 6 wherein the upper surface of each of the second plurality of guard plate assemblies is formed from the first material.

8. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 1 wherein the guard plate assemblies include a third layer of material joined to a surface of the second layer of material, the third layer of material being different than the second layer of material.

9. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 1 wherein the second layer of material has a surface property that has higher friction than the first material.

10. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 1 wherein the second layer of material has a surface property that is more resistive to wear than the first layer of material.

Claims 11-14 (canceled)

15. (currently amended) A fabric comprising a woven fabric substrate and a single layer of non-overlapping guard plate assemblies affixed to a top surface of the fabric substrate, wherein each guard plate assembly includes a printed polygonal shaped first layer of material directly joined to the top surface of the fabric substrate, and a second layer of material joined to the first layer of material opposite the fabric substrate, wherein the printed first layer of material is joined directly to the top surface of the fabric substrate, and wherein adjacent

polygonal shaped first layers of material are separated by linear gaps each having an approximately uniform width and maintain a fixed relationship relative to one another.

16. (cancelled) .

17. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 16, wherein the printable first layer of material comprises epoxy.

18. (currently amended) The fabric of claim 1, wherein a lesser extent of height of each of the plurality of polygonal guard plates penetrate~~permeate~~ the top surface of the fabric substrate.

19. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 1, wherein a greater extent of height of each of the plurality of polygonal guard plates extends above the top surface of the fabric substrate.

20. (previously presented) The fabric of claim 1, wherein the plurality of polygonal guard plates define a plurality of approximately linear gaps between adjacent plates, and wherein each of the linear gaps is approximately uniform in width.